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Committee Assignments

- Ways & Means, Ranking Republican
- International Trade & Economic Development
- Rules

Important Date

The Chelan County court ruled Thursday that the "discovery" phase of Dino Rossi's law suit will last the full 30 days, rather than the expedited schedule preferred by the GOP.

Now we wait until Feb. 4 when the court has set a hearing on the Democrat's motion to dismiss the case altogether. I'll continue to keep you informed.

Sen. Joe Zarelli's

UPDATE FROM OLYMPIA

1/21/05

Dear Friends,

The Senate and House will spend the next six weeks holding public hearings and work sessions on bills referred to each chamber's standing committees. For more information about bills and committee agendas, visit the Legislature's Web site at: <http://www1.leg.wa.gov/legislature>.

I am hoping this is the year the Legislature will approve state agency performance audits, an oversight program that has been promoted by Republicans since the early 1990s. Given the state's continued budget problems, it's time to put some effort into a program that will save taxpayer dollars rather than spend them. I have co-sponsored **SB 5083**, which will allow performance audits of Washington state agencies. Performance audits can find inefficiencies that government agencies can't see for themselves and they can measure an agency's results against the effectiveness of its processes. This kind of oversight has worked well in other states and should be a priority for the 2005 Legislature.

Also, although it's still very early in the session, majority Democrats in the House and Senate have already indicated they've closed the door on the two initiatives to reform Washington's civil liability laws and address the high cost of medical malpractice insurance. Senate Republicans have worked hard on these issues for the past several sessions. Frivolous lawsuits and excessive noneconomic damage awards cost Washington consumers and taxpayers millions of dollars annually and threaten access to affordable health care, affordable housing and vital services.

The two initiatives, I-330 backed by doctors and hospitals and I-336 backed by trial lawyers, are both before the Legislature. The Legislature has three options for dealing with an Initiative to the Legislature: pass it into law as proposed, reject it and send it to the ballot, or pass an amended version. In that case, the alternative and the original measure would both go to voters. Detailed information about the initiatives can be found on the Secretary of State's Web site at: <http://www.secstate.wa.gov/elections/initiatives>.

As always, please contact my office with any concerns or questions. It truly is a pleasure to serve you.

Sincerely,

Sen. Joe Zarelli, 18th Legislative District

District Day – You are invited!

The 18th Legislative District Day will be held on Wednesday, March 23. The day will include a tour of the newly-refurbished Legislative Building, lunch with myself, Rep. Orcutt and Rep. Curtis, a tour of the Governor's Mansion and a tour of the Temple of Justice. We will start the day at 10:00 a.m. in the State Reception Room, located in the Legislative Building. Please contact my office if you plan on attending!